

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

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USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /151 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 907

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7419

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJECT: ARREST OF RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC LEADERS AT YMCA RALLY

1. ON NOVEMBER 5, WIRE SERVICES REPORTED THAT ROK POLICE ARRESTED A GROUP OF TWENTY RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC LEADERS WHO WERE CONDUCTING A RALLY IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY AT YMCA CAFETERIA. AMONG THOSE ARRESTED WERE REVEREND KIM CHAE JOON, CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY WHICH ORGANIZED RALLY; POET KIM CHI HA AND OTHER CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT AND BUDDHIST REPS.

2. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ISSUED A STATEMENT CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONDUCT OF ITS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES AND DEMANDING RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM WHICH HAD BEEN SUPPRESSED SINCE PROCLAMATION OF MARTIAL LAW AND YUSHIN A YEAR AGO. OTHERWISE, NOT ONLY FUTURE OF REGIME, BUT ALSO OF REPUBLIC WOULD BE ENDANGERED, AND SIGNATORS VOWED TO RISE AND STRUGGLE TO THEIR UTMOST FOR A COMPLETE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY.

3. THE COUNCIL FURTHER DECLARED THAT THE ONLY WAY
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LEFT FOR NATIONAL SURVIVAL WAS TO CONSOLIDATE ALL THE

RESOURCES OF THE PEOPLE UNDER THE BANNER OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS, AND PRAISED THE RECENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEOUL WHICH HAD DENOUNCED THE DICTATORSHIP OF PRESIDENT PARK.

4. AMONG THE FIFTEEN SIGNATORS WERE HAM SUK-HUN, A KOREAN RELIGIOUS LEADER, AND CHUN KWAN-WOO, A HISTORIAN AND FORMER JOURNALIST. NINE OF THE FIFTEEN WERE AMONG THOSE PRESENT AND ARRESTED, BUT IT IS NOT YET KNOWN IF HAM AND CHUN WERE AMONG THEM. ALL PARTICIPANTS ENTERED THE POLICE VANS PEACEFULLY, SHEPHERDED BY TWO PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMEN.

5. COMMENT: EARLIER IN DAY, REV. KIM KWAN SUK, GENERAL SECRETARY OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, INFORMED THE POLITICAL SOUNSELOR AND LABOR ATTACHE THAT ABOVE LISTED CHURCH AND CIVIC LEADERS WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETING AS INDIVIDUALS TO ANNOUNCE THEIR CONCERN OVER THE SUPPRESSION OF DEMOCRACY IN KOREA AND THEIR SUPPORT OF STUDENT PROTESTS.

6. KIM ALSO SAID GROUP OF NCCCK REPS WERE PLANNING TO HOLD A MEETING LATER THAT AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS THE STUDENT AND POLITICAL SITUATION. REV. KIM INDICATED THAT NCCCK AND OTHER CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE SYMPATHETIC TO, AND ARE INCREASINGLY WILLING TO SUPPORT, STUDENTS IN THEIR PROTESTS AGAINST GOVERNMENT. KIM SAID THAT FOUR OF EIGHT SNU STUDENTS STILL INCARCERATED WERE KOREAN STUDENT CHRISTAIN FEDERATION LEADERS. KSCF JOINTLY WITH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT GROUPS HAD FORMED JOINT RELIEF COMMITTEE TO COLLECT FUNDS FOR THE STUDENT VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND IMPLICITLY TO DEMONSTRATE OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT.

7. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY WAS AN AD HOC ORGANIZATION OF INTELLECTUALS AND CIVIC LEADERS ACTIVE IN 1971 WHEN IT CLAIMED OVER 50 WELL-KNOWN SUPPORTERS. IT HAD NOT BEEN HEARD FROM FOLLOWING MARTIAL LAW PERIOD IN 1972.
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